

REMARKS

Claim 1 was objected to in view of a typographical error. Applicants have amended the claim above to correct the typographical error.

Claims 2 and 4-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been amended above to overcome this rejection.

Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Farhnbauer et al. (US 6,599,026) in view of Chien (US 5,181,268). The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974).

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite, *inter alia*, "a fiber-optic cable arrangement with a plug housing ... which ... has a guide segment and a clamping segment ... the fiber-optic and the inner sheathing extend into the guide segment". In contrast, Farhnbauer merely discloses a contact tube 6 for receiving an optical fiber end 1, wherein the contact tube 6 comprises a first region 15, a second region 16, and a receiving region 17. In Farhnbauer, the "stripped length of the optical fiber end 1 is so dimensioned that the end face 5 of the optical fiber end 1 comes to rest at the transition between the first region 15 and the third region 17" (see col. 4, lines 7-10). In other words, the optical fiber end 1 is

only disposed within the first region 15 and the second region 16. There is no disclosure or suggestion that the optical fiber end extends into the receiving region 17. The receiving region 17 does not guide the optical fiber end 1 at all, instead the receiving region 17 serves "to receive a complementary optical connector, also having an optical fiber end, that has a pin-shaped configuration that can be inserted into the region 17 for optical coupling of the fibers" (see col. 3, lines 63-67). Chien discloses a fiber 10 having a first protective coating 16, a buffer layer 18, and an interfacial layer 13, with no disclosure of a plug housing for the fiber. Neither Farhnbauer nor Chien teach or suggest a fiber-optic cable arrangement with a plug housing having a guide segment and a clamping segment wherein the fiber-optic and the inner sheathing extend into the guide segment as claimed in applicants' claimed invention.

Applicants submit that the proposed combination of Farhnbauer in view of Chien would render a fiber-optic cable arrangement having a contact tube housing with a clamping region and a receiving region wherein the clamping region receives an optical fiber and the receiving region receives a mating optical connector, as opposed to applicants' claimed invention having a "fiber-optic cable arrangement with a plug housing, which ... has a guide segment and a clamping segment ... wherein ... the clamping segment of the fiber-optic plug has projections on its inner wall for crimping with the inner and outer sheathings of the fiber-optic cable, and the fiber-optic and the inner sheathing extend into the guide segment".

Furthermore, applicants submit that there is no suggestion to combine the references as the examiner is attempting to do (at least not until after reading applicants' patent application). In particular, Farhnbauer does not provide for crimping of the fiber optic cable, but instead teaches "ultrasonic welding of the contact tube 6 to the optical fiber end 1, [wherein] these transverse ribs fuse with the outer or primary sheath of the optical fiber end 1" (see col. 4, lines 59-61). In applicants' claimed invention, as the fiber optic cable crimps on the plastic housing, the thickness of the plug side region 3a is sufficient not to damage the fiber. The crimping and the deformation caused by the crimping may produce an inaccurate positioning of the fiber through the plug side region 3a. Therefore, the guide segment 2 is advantageous in that it helps to 'guide' the optical fiber and alleviates any inaccurate positioning resulting from the crimping operation. This is also beneficial as applicants' invention accurately positions the optical fiber relative to an outside diameter of the guide segment 2 as it is a 'plug' housing. Alternatively, Farhnbauer does not guide the optical fiber, as there is no crimping (and thus no inaccurate positioning resulting from crimping), and the optical fiber is positioned to the mating connector relative to an inside diameter of the receiving region 17 as the end of the fiber is proximate a middle portion of the contact tube.

Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves

or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. (see MPEP 2143.01, page 2100-98, column 1). The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination (see MPEP 2143.01, page 2100-98, column 2). A statement that modifications of the prior art to meet the claimed invention would have been "well within the ordinary skill of the art at the time the claimed invention was made" because the references relied upon teach that all aspects of the claimed invention were individually known in the art is **not sufficient** to establish a prima facie case of obviousness without some objective reason to combine the teachings of the references. (see MPEP 2143.01, page 2100-99, column 1) Ex parte Levengood, 28 USPQ2d 1300 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1993). >See also Al-Site Corp. v. VSI Int'l Inc., 174 F.3d 1308, 50 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1999) (The level of skill in the art cannot be relied upon to provide the suggestion to combine references.)

In the present case, there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation, found in either the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to provide a fiber-optic cable arrangement with a plug housing having a guide segment and a clamping segment wherein the fiber-optic and the inner sheathing extend into the guide segment as claimed in claim 1. The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claim 3 contains its own allowable subject matter, this claim should at least be allowable due to its

dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claims 9 and 10 have been added above to further claim the features recited therein.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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